

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BD, PK

SUBJ: BHUTTO TO VISIT BANGLADESH

REF: ISLAMABAD 5956; DACCA 2832

1. ANNOUNCING BHUTTO'S JUNE 27-29 VISIT TO BANGLADESH, FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN TOLD PRESS THAT IT WOULD BE ESSENTIALLY A GOOD-WILL VISIT. BHUTTO PARTY WOULD BE LARGE AND HIGH-LEVEL, INCLUDING PARLIAMENTARIANS AND JOURNALISTS AS WELL AS OFFICIALS, ALTHOUGH COMPOSITION NOT YET FIXED. CULTURAL TROUPE WOULD ALSO ACCOMPANY PRIMIN. GROUP WILL TRAVEL BY PIA OVEVDLYING INDIAN TERRITORY, ARRIVING DACCA LATE MORNING JUNE 27. NO STOPOVER IN INDIA WAS PLANNED.

2. FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN RECITED BRIEF HISTORY OF GOP EFFORTS TO IMPROVE PAK-BANGLADESH RELATIONS, "BEGINNING WITH DECEMBER 20, 1971 WHECAMR. BHUTTO ASSUMED OFFICE", NOTING THAT BHUTTO HAD RELEASED SHEIKH MUJIBHVND PERMITTED HIM DEPART FOR BANGLADESH "WITH DUE HONORS", THAT

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GOP HAD ACCORDED "GENEROUS FACILITIES" TO BANGALEES

IN PAKIECAN PENDING THEIR REPATRIATION, AND THAT MUJIB HAD BEEN ACCORDED A WARM WELCOME WHEN HE VISITED PAKISTAN FOR ISLAMIC SUMMIT. SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT BDG FOR ITS PART HAD DROPPED IDEA OF WAR CRIMES TRIALS, THEREBY DEMONSTRATING "EARNEST DESIRE OF THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH FOR GIVING PRIORITY TO THE FUTURE OVER THE PAS O".

3. REPLYING TO NEWSMEN'S QUESTIONS, SPOKESMAN SAID BHUTTO PROGRAM IN DACCA WAS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION. PAKS EXPECTED THAT BHUTTO-MUJIB TALKS WOULD COVER "ALL VARIETIES" OF TOPICS AND THAT "CERTAIN CONCLUSIONS" AND "CERTAIN BROAD UNDERSTANDINGS" ABOUT COURSE OF FUTURE PAK-BANGLADESH RELATIONS WOULD BE REACHED, BUT HE DID NOT ELABORATE.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME HESITANCY IN BDG'S ACCEPTANCE OF GOP'S PROPOSED DATE FOR VISIT (ISLAMABAD 5498), POSTPONEMENT FEARED BY GOP AS RESULT ALLEGED INDIAN MACHINATIONS DID NOT MATERIALIZE. REPORTED SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF BHUTTO PARTY SUGGEST THAT PAKS HOPE TO CAPITALIZE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CEREMONIAL-SYMBOLIC ASPECTS OF VISIT. PAK PRESS HAS CONTINUED TO PLAY UP PROSPECTS FOR WARM GOP-BDG RELATIONS, TO STRESS FRICTION BAHYEEN BENGALIS AND INDIANS, AND TO SUGGEST THAT CURRENT BANGLADESH ECONOMIC DISLOCATIONS COULD BE ALLEVIATED THROUGH GREATER TRADE WITH PAKISTAN. PAK SPOKESMAN WAS NOTABLY VAGUE ABOUT SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED, MAKING NO MENTION OF SUCH POTENTIALLY THRONQEQOPICS AS QUESTION OF GOP ACCEPTING ADDITIONAL NON-BENGALIS. BYROADE

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